

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are now pending in the present application. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The allowance of claims 22 and 23 is gratefully acknowledged, as is the allowability of claims 4-13, 17, 18, 20 and 21. Claim 4 has been rewritten into independent form. Accordingly, claims 4-13, 22 and 23 are condition for allowance.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the detailed review. The specification and drawings have been amended to be clear and definite.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DRAWINGS UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.83(b):

The drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.83(b) on the grounds that the drawings were incomplete. Specifically, the drawings were objected to on the grounds that the locking ring structure present within the hub aperture was not clearly shown in Fig. 5. The drawings as submitted herewith include an amended drawing Fig. 5 in which the drawing is correctly described as "prior art." This proper label was inadvertently left off from Fig. 5 as originally submitted, and was in no means an attempt to mislead the Examiner. The "locking ring" as located within the central hub aperture of the wheel as shown in Fig. 5, and as described in paragraphs [0018], [0020] and [0021] of the present application, is well known in the prior art, and as a result is clearly shown in Fig. 5 to those skilled in the art.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS:

Claims 19 and 23 have been amended in accordance with the objections as raised by the Examiner.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102:

Claims 1 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Wieczorek et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,238,007. As amended, claim 1 defines a composite

wheel that comprises a wheel having an outer surface and a centrally-located hub aperture extending through the wheel, and a wheel cap having a body portion and a plurality of flexibly resilient fingers extending substantially orthogonal to the wheel portion, each finger having a pair of sidewalls and an integrally-formed outer wall, the outer wall including a centrally-located portion and rounded abutment portions located proximate the sidewalls, wherein the fingers abut the hub aperture when the wheel cap is assembled with the wheel. Wieczorek et al. discloses a retaining article for wheel ornamentation that includes a unitary structure that is received by a wheel ornamentation which has an inboard surface with a number of protrusions extending outwardly therefrom. The retaining article includes a ring with a number of openings extending therethrough. The openings receive the protruding cylinders therein and are secured thereto by a number of tabs. The retaining article further includes a plurality of legs extending outwardly from the ring. Each leg is adapted to engage a portion of a lug nut that secures the wheel to the associated vehicle. The legs of the retaining article as disclosed by Wieczorek et al. in no way or manner engages a central hub aperture of an associated wheel. Therefore, Wieczorek et al. cannot anticipate claim 1.

Moreover, Wieczorek does not teach or suggest the subject matter as defined in claim 1. Instead, Wieczorek et al. discloses a retaining article that specifically engages a plurality of lug nuts utilized to secure the wheel to an associated vehicle. As defined in amended claim 1, the fingers of the wheel cap abut the central hub aperture of the associated wheel when the wheel cap is assembled with the wheel. The routed edges of each of the flexibly resilient fingers, as defined in claim 1, reduces the frictional engagement between the edges of the fingers and the central hub aperture of the wheel as the wheel cap is assembled with the associated wheel, thereby reducing unnecessary wear to the aesthetic appearance of the wheel, as well as to any protective coatings that are applied thereto.

Accordingly, claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Claims 2, 3, and 10-14 are dependent from claim 1 which is in condition for allowance, as noted above, and are therefore also in condition for allowance.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103:

Claims 2, 3, 15, 16 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wieczorek et al., in view of Chiu, U.S. Patent No. 5,509,725. As amended, claim 15 defines a wheel center cap for a vehicle wheel that comprises a substantially planar body portion, and a plurality of flexibly resilient fingers extending substantially orthogonal to the body portion and adapted to abut a wall of a wheel, each finger having a pair of sidewalls and an integrally-formed outer wall, the outer wall including a centrally located portion defining a first radius of curvature, and rounded abutment portions located proximate the sidewalls, and laterally from the centrally located portion and having a second radius of curvature that is less than the first radius of curvature. Chiu discloses a wheel assembly including a wheel having a recessed wall portion at an outer side and smoothly curved peripheral wall portion around the recessed wall portion, a wheel cover having a plurality of sliding grooves radially disposed at an inner side and a plurality of locating blocks by the sliding grooves. The locating blocks define with the wheel cover, a respective receiving chamber. The wheel assembly further includes a plurality of clamps fastened to the wheel and the wheel cover to hold them together, wherein each clamp has one end hooked on the peripheral wall portion of the wheel and an opposite end inserted through one sliding groove into the corresponding receiving chamber. The differing radii of curvature as disclosed by Chiu are not laterally offset from one another across a flexibly resilient finger, as defined in claim 15.

Accordingly, claim 15 is in condition for allowance. Claims 16-21 and 24-27 are dependent from claim 15 which is in condition for allowance, as noted above, and are therefore also in condition for allowance.

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Appln. No. : 10/689,228
Page -13-

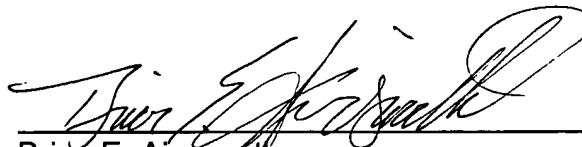
Accordingly, claims 1-27 are in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowability is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: Price, Heneveld, Cooper,
DeWitt & Litton, LLP

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Page -9-

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached sheet of drawings include changes to Fig. 5. The replacement sheet, which includes Figs. 5 and 6, replaces the original sheet including Figs. 5 and 6. In Fig. 5, previously omitted label "Prior Art" has been added.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet
Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

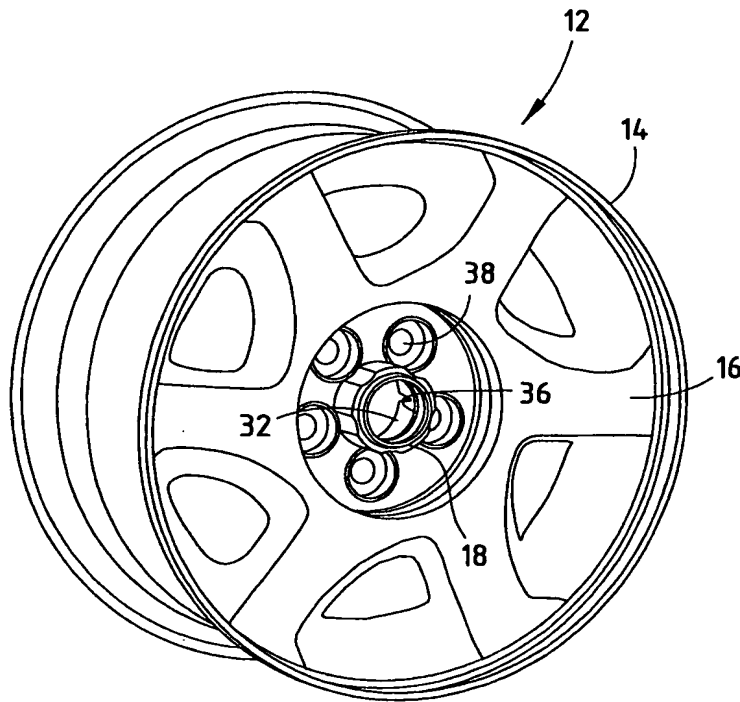
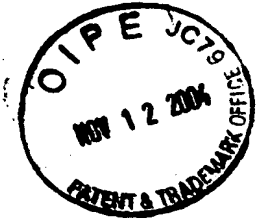


FIG. 5
PRIOR ART

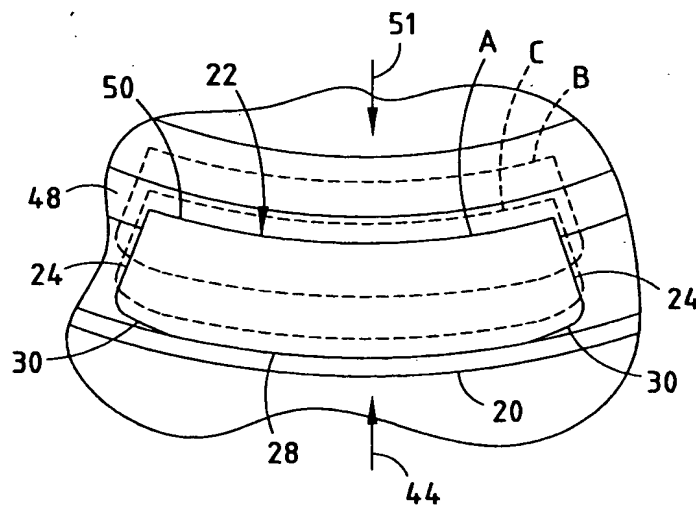


FIG. 6